



PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Awards Grants to Local Food Ventures

Grant Program Aims to Increase Access to Fresh Food, Create Jobs in Low- and Moderate-Income Communities

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

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**WORCESTER** — The Baker-Polito Administration today announced that the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) has awarded \$811,176 for three community-based food ventures to expand their operations. The grants are awarded through the Massachusetts Food Ventures Program (MFVP), a grant program that aims to improve food access and expand economic opportunities by encouraging new food ventures throughout the state.

“Community-based food ventures and enterprises play a critical role in connecting Massachusetts farmers and their healthy, locally grown food products to Commonwealth residents,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “By supporting these enterprises, the Massachusetts Food Ventures Program plays an important role in our administration’s efforts to reduce food insecurity and improve economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income communities across the Commonwealth.”

“Massachusetts’ local agricultural enterprises provide residents nutritious food products as well as opportunities for local job creation and entrepreneurship,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “Through the Massachusetts Food Ventures Program, we are proud to fund the strategic investments in

agricultural infrastructure that are vitally important for businesses like commercial kitchens, greenhouses, farmers markets and food truck commissaries.”

The MFVP provides financial support to food ventures sited primarily in or near communities of low- or moderate-income, including Gateway Cities and rural communities. With expanded investment, completed projects will improve access to Massachusetts-grown, harvested or caught food products through the development of collaborations with local agricultural enterprises and private/public entities. The program also helps implement the goals of the [Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan](#).

“Supporting local food ventures and our agricultural industry is a crucial part of implementing our Local Food Action Plan and building a sustainable, resilient, and equitable food system in which more of our food is grown, caught, processed and distributed within Massachusetts,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “These food ventures help farmers extend their season and expand their markets while improving access to healthy, locally grown, affordable foods in food insecure communities.”

Funded projects include new construction that will create temporary and full-time employment, as well as create facilities that will foster job creation and expansion of food access and distribution in low- to moderate-income areas.

“The Massachusetts Food Ventures program has been an important component to supporting Massachusetts agriculture while providing sustainable local food options,” **said MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux**. “Funding for these organizations provides the much needed resources needed for infrastructure and our investments are helping enterprises to provide equitable access to healthy local food.”

Key areas of investment for the MFVP are food processing infrastructure to meet the needs of the expanding local food system; improved distribution systems to support opportunities for equitable access to fresh local food; and retail outlet strategies that enhance access to healthy food.

The following groups received grants:

**Worcester Public Kitchen, Worcester County, \$500,000**

This award will be used to purchase specialized equipment for Worcester Public Kitchen’s manufacturing operation that focuses primarily on processing Massachusetts grown and harvested food products. The end product will be shelf stable and other value-added products, helping emerging food businesses scale up.

**Kitchen Garden, Franklin County, \$142,876**

Kitchen Garden will purchase food processing equipment for a new commercial kitchen on its farm, scaling up production of value-added products and creating new jobs year-round.

### **Commonwealth Kitchen, Suffolk County, \$168,300**

This award will be used to purchase specialized equipment for Commonwealth Kitchen's manufacturing operation that focuses primarily on processing Massachusetts grown and harvested food products. The end product will be shelf stable and other value-added products, helping emerging food businesses scale up.

"A strong community-based food infrastructure is the backbone of a healthy state," **said Senate President Harriette Chandler (D-Worcester)**. "These critical resources will have a multiplier effect for our economy and the health of our residents, enabling emerging businesses to grow, connecting growers with an expanded market, and providing access to healthy foods in traditionally underserved areas and food deserts."

"Worcester Public Kitchen is at the intersections of food access and security, the local food movement, and supporting emerging businesses," **said State Representative Mary Keefe (D-Worcester)**. "I'm very pleased that this grant will increase their production scale and overall impact in our community."

"I congratulate the Kitchen Garden on receiving this significant state grant which will help expand their production and create new employment in our agricultural sector," **said State Representative Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington)**. "For more than a decade, I have watched Tim Wilcox and Caroline Pam work hard to grow their business, improve the land that they farm, and earn a reputation for producing vegetables and food products of the highest quality. This grant is a smart public investment in building a stronger and more sustainable agricultural economy in Massachusetts."

"I'm thrilled to see one of these grants go to Commonwealth Kitchen. They are a fantastic organization: they bring fresh food to our neighborhoods, bolster our local economy, and increase equity within the food industry," **said State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz (D-Boston)**. "MFVP grants will help Commonwealth Kitchen and organizations like them expand their services and provide much-needed support to upcoming food businesses in our state. This is a valuable and exciting investment in our neighborhoods."

MDAR's goals have been to increase and sustain the capacity of local food producers and enterprises to provide tangible, measurable benefits to residents in low-moderate income communities which include increased access to healthy, Massachusetts-produced foods, entrepreneurial opportunities, and economic enhancement.

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## [Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources →](#)

The Department's mission is to help keep the Massachusetts' food supply safe and secure, and to work to keep Massachusetts agriculture economically and environmentally sound.

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